DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 678 JC 000 638

TITLE	Alternative Calendars: Recommendations and a Progress Report, Adopted April 2000.
INSTITUTION	Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Sacramento.
PUB DATE	2000-04-00
NOTE	18p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Educational Change; *Educational Planning; Educational Practices; *School Schedules; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Alternative School Calendars; *California Community Colleges

ABSTRACT

As a consequence of changes to the 175-day rule governing the length of the school calendar, many colleges are considering moving to alternative calendars. To assist in the deliberations on the multiplicity of issues involved in such a change, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is offering a set of recommendations regarding alternative calendars that was adopted by the Plenary Body and a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding alternative calendars along with their answers. Recommendations include such items as: local academic senates should consult collegially and take a leading role in developing the process to determine calendar changes; they must work closely with their bargaining units to identify issues of concern and clarify appropriate provinces for decision-making as it affects faculty; and faculty should debate within and between disciplines the academic and pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of any proposed calendar. FAQs address such issues as: What is meant by an "alternative" calendar? What exactly are intersessions? What prompts these discussions about alternative calendars now? Do students perform better with the traditional model? What are the forms of such alternative calendars? Do alternative calendars provide advantages/disadvantages for faculty/students? How is matriculation handled? and Would all colleges in a multi-college district have to agree on a single calendar? (VWC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 444 678

Alternative Calendars: Recommendations and a Progress Report

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Adopted April 2000

R. M. Silverman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

JC000638

1999 - 2000 Educational Policies Committee
Hoke Simpson, Chair, Grossmont College
Lacy Barnes-Mileham, Reedley College
Kate Clark, Irvine Valley College
Elton Hall, Moorpark College
Mary Rider, Grossmont College
Ian Walton, Mission College
Susan Carleo, Los Angeles Valley College, CIO Representative

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table of Contents

Abstract 1
Recommendations Regarding Alternative Calendars 2
Introduction 5
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Alternative Calendars 6

ABSTRACT

As a consequence of changes to the 175-day rule, many colleges are considering moving to alternative calendars. To assist in the deliberations on the multiplicity of issues involved in such a change, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is offering what are essentially two documents: 1) a set of recommendations regarding alternative calendars that was adopted by the Plenary Body; and 2) a series of frequently asked questions, or FAQs, regarding alternative calendars, along with their answers. The second document is not offered for adoption, but rather is offered in the nature of a progress report on the implementation of alternative calendars. This second document is the product of a breakout at the Fall 1999 Plenary Session of the Academic Senate and of interviews conducted by Kate Clark of the Educational Policies Committee. Both the breakout presenters and Ms. Clark's interviewees were faculty and administrators from Santa Monica College and faculty from Riverside College. Santa Monica College actually implemented a 16-6-16-6 calendar prior to the 175-rule change, and has thus been functioning in this mode for many years. Riverside College has just moved to the 16-6-16-6 calendar for the 1999-2000 academic year.

The Executive Committee is grateful to representatives of both Santa Monica and Riverside Colleges for sharing their experiences, and believes that the account of those experiences reflected in the FAQ document will be useful in informing deliberations around the state. However, because of the very small sample size one college, Santa Monica, whose representatives feel their alternative calendar has worked out splendidly, and a second college, Riverside, that as attempted to anticipate and address the issues, but where the jury is still out_the Executive Committee did not think it appropriate to offer the FAQ document for adoption, as this would be to endorse specific solutions on the basis of too little evidence. On the other hand, the recommendations serve to remind local academic senates that in deliberations on alternative calendars, as elsewhere, the longstanding Academic Senate commitments to access, equity, and academic quality should remain paramount.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ALTERNATIVE CALENDARS

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges makes the following recommendations to local academic senates:

1. Local academic senates should consult collegially and take a leading role in developing the process to determine calendar changes, including, but not limited to the formulation of criteria for selection to which all models will be subjected. Clearly such criteria will give primacy to student access and student academic success before desires to increase enrollment or to serve other administrative ends.

2. Local academic senates must ensure that the quality of educational programs and curricular offerings are not diminished by any change; rather, the desire is to improve both.

3. Local academic senates must work closely with their bargaining units to identify issues of concern and clarify appropriate provinces for decision-making as it affects faculty. Such decisions, within the shared governance process, will ensure respect for the delegated authority of the senates and the statutory and locally-negotiated responsibilities of the bargaining units.

4. Faculty should debate within and between disciplines the academic and pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of any proposed calendar.

5. Flex and Staff Development Officers must work with the local senates to ensure full opportunities for continued professional growth, exchange, and development within the contractual obligations, regardless of the calendar model.

6. Local academic senates, working with students as shared governance participants, should identify those populations of students most likely to be negatively impacted by changes and to identify their concerns.

7. Local academic senates should be advocates for unique programs or activities whose special or contractual demands must be considered.

8. Local academic senates should work with their bargaining agent to identify faculty (e.g., librarians and counselors) on whom differential responsibilities or opportunities might fall and to seek resolution of inequities.

9. Local academic senates must identify services and facilities necessary to instruction and to full college participation by their students; such faculty services as computing facilities, administrative support, duplication services, and the library must be matched by services that will provide full access to all students, regardless of their term of enrollment.

10. Faculty must remain sensitive to the demands these changes would place on staff and hourly employees and to understand how their own senate-adopted policies and practices might impact their workload.

11. Finally, the local academic senates must insist on mechanisms to retain shared governance and resist any efforts inadvertent or intentional to silence the voice of faculty by making significant decisions when faculty are not present on campus.

INTRODUCTION

This document emerges at a time when California community colleges are exploring mechanisms to better utilize facilities, plan for enrollment surges, and meet changing student needs. One particular mechanism, modifying academic calendars, comes in response to the 1992 changes in the Education Code's 175-day rule governing the length of the school calendar. Acknowledging this interest, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges held a breakout on Alternative Calendars during its Fall 1999 Plenary Session.

More specifically, this document responds to several charges, the first of which arose in Academic Senate resolutions:

> ***9.05 S99 Compressed Courses***
> *Study and research compressed course offerings, including the effects on student learners and make recommendations for possible changes in Title 5 regulations regarding such cases.*
>
> ***11.10 F97 New Calendar for Technology Age***
> *Study and report on models of instructional calendars that are reflective of technologically influenced modes of instruction.*

Further, in response to a request from the Consultation Council to examine model academic calendars, it was determined that, as one college currently employs a quarter system, and only two colleges have today adopted and implemented calendars significantly different from the conventional models, it might be premature to suggest a single model or to prescribe a standard approach. Rather, what follows, are the *inquiries* college faculty might employ to begin their deliberations. These questions should be used to initiate further discussions of the implications any calendar change would have for faculty on curriculum, pedagogy, staff development, governance, and collective bargaining.

General recommendations for involvement and action of local academic senates are included, as well as suggestions to faculty in general. At the conclusion of this paper is an appendix that includes materials of other institutions as they conducted inquiry and deliberated the options now available to any college.

The Academic Senate's Educational Policies Committee wishes to acknowledge the following individuals who provided materials and presentations, making possible this FAQ sheet. Duplication of their ideas and comments has been done with their kind and generous permission.

- Riverside Community College: Faculty Member David Waxman
- Santa Monica College: Faculty Members Charles Donaldson; Randy Lawson, Ruth Logan; Espy Nieto (Registrar's Office)
- Los Angeles Pierce: Darroch F. Young (President)

THE FAQs ABOUT ALTERNATIVE CALENDARS

What is Meant by an "Alternative" Calendar?

The California Education Code ' 58142 requires community college districts, in order to receive "full apportionment, to maintain the colleges . . . for at least 175 days during the next preceding fiscal year." A recent change in the Education Code (' 58120. Conditions for Inclusion As A Day) now allows that "for a day to count towards meeting the requirements of ' 58142, courses of instruction must be offered for a minimum of three hours during the period of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m." While California community colleges had routinely offered classes Monday through Saturday, Sundays could now be added, encouraging colleges to consider such programs as weekend

colleges, seminars, and other configurations of those days. Regardless of the possible mode, however, the Carnegie unit/hour relationship needed to be maintained.

The calendar traditionally used by most districts has been a 18-18-6-6 model that included two semesters of 17.5-18 weeks, and one or more summer sessions of 6, 8, or 12 weeks in length. Within that 175-day parameter, flex activities are then tacked onto this standard calendar, sometimes preceding fall or spring semesters or both. Alternative calendars, which might be introduced for a variety of reasons, seek to define those 175 days outside that traditional construction while preserving the same number of instructional hours per course. As an alternative, those calendars may be compressed (wherein the students have more contact with faculty per day, for fewer days or weeks, with no loss of instructional time over the course of the primary term).

Other alternatives might be designed to accommodate various mediated instruction. Given that students taking courses in a distance learning mode might access the material at their convenience, conceivably they could compress their own calendar by completing all required work in a shorter period of time than the semester serving as the college's standard; on the other hand, students needing additional time for personal or academic reasons, could seek to define a semester in yet another fashion. Currently, changes in software that track a student's time on task and other mechanical measurements of instructional time are under review by faculty across the state. From the student's point of view, an open entry/open exit arrangement free of the current semester parameters would allow them to complete an online course at their own pace; and indeed, many colleges now have the technology whereby to track their enrollment and the progress they make through a course. Local academic senates should have in place a curriculum review process to ensure that the course meets the Carnegie Unit Requirement to satisfy demands of any transfer institution. What remains a stumbling block for colleges, however, is the matter of apportionment funding. At present, the funding mechanism is based upon attendance during a percentage of a full semester. Just how differential enrollment periods would be figured remains a dilemma that may ultimately call for redress by the Legislature.

For that series of reasons the changes in statute, the shifting concept of a traditional term, and the fluid semester boundaries that seem a benefit of mediated instruction herein our discussion of alternative calendars will focus on models of compression and expansion through the use of intersessions.

What Exactly are Intersessions?

Like those offered by many California Status University (CSU) campuses, community college intersessions occur between "regular" or full semesters, generally identified as the primary terms. As we see with those colleges offering or now planning intersessions, usually courses run 4-6 weeks in length, though the courses may be as short as several days or a single week, so long as they retain the Carnegie unit/hour relationship. These sessions do not attempt to offer a full contingent of courses or to attract the same number of students attending a full semester, yet these additional offerings can serve as a "safety valve" for students needing to repeat an essential course, to pick up additional units, or to satisfy prerequisites.

According to some, a winter intersession improves student success because it allows an accelerated completion of a course sequence or allows unsuccessful students to repeat class in sequence without losing time or that sequence; further, Santa Monica College's experience, as you will see below, demonstrated that fewer weeks of instruction resulted in greater student retention and success.

What Prompts These Discussions About Alternative Calendars Now?

Faculty and administrators have expressed curiosity about these calendars, especially since two colleges, Riverside College and Santa Monica College, have switched to such scheduling. As contracts come up for renewal throughout the state, faculty and boards have a vested interest in examining the potentials for such a change. Recognizing the building momentum, the Academic Senate offered a breakout discussion at its Fall 1999 Plenary Session that was well-attended and reflected the serious questions faculty raise. Given the impact such calendar changes would have on faculty and on their curriculum, their students, and their contractual obligations, it is important to be informed about the advantages and disadvantages of any academic calendar model.

California's changing demographics also encourage examination of alternative calendars as a mechanism to accommodate students affected by changes in the welfare law, technology, workplace demands, and career changes necessitated by corporate downsizing. As evidenced by the offerings of proprietary and private schools, many students today seek an alternative to the traditional school calendar of 18 weeks.

Further, while community college districts once attempted to align their calendars with those of their local unified school districts, such efforts today are more difficult and seemingly less important. As college districts often encompass multiple K-12 districts, each with its idiosyncratic calendar, this former alignment is now made virtually impossible given the many

year-round schools within those unified districts. Additionally, college districts already attend to a variety of calendars: the administration 175 days, the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) calendar, and the personnel calendars of individual districts. Superimposing an alternative or compressed academic calendar no longer represents the administrative burden it might once have.

Finally, the wide-spread anticipation of a surge of students of college age, poised to enter California colleges and universities (often referred to as Tidal Wave II), has prompted discussions among chief executive officers and chief instructional officers about potential enrollment management strategies to accommodate these increased numbers despite current constraints on their physical plants and their fiscal condition. Given the interest that the University of California (UC) and CSU Systems have in boosting transfer rates, aligning calendars with the start of nearby transfer institutions may, in fact, increase transfer rates and benefit the students attempting to pace their work. At the same time, such alignment may benefit CSU students redirected to local community colleges to complete necessary remediation.

What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Current, Traditional 18-18-6-6 Model?

This calendar, a conservative model, is familiar to us all and consequently, it is easily scheduled and manipulated. It is observed widely, and makes it easy to coordinate inter-college meetings or sharing of employees (hourly staff, part-time faculty, etc.). On the other hand, its early end in May, while perhaps popular with faculty, may not offset problems associated with its early start: it precludes admission by parents who encounter child care problems, and at some colleges, the August start exacerbates problems from the heat. Further, the length of the semester may contribute, according to some, to a higher student drop-out rate and offers fewer opportunities for students to complete course requirements in a timely fashion.

Do Students Perform Better With the Traditional Model?

Some faculty argue that the longer semester favors some students who need a "slow rate of information flow." Other faculty, however, argue that the length is detrimental to "effective collegiate instruction. While more extensive research should be done, a preliminary study cited later in this paper suggests that students may be more successful with shorter semesters.

What are the Forms of Such Alternative Calendars?

Though any variety might be considered, the three models currently below seem to attract the most discussion. Some of the advantages and disadvantages are noted here and discussed more fully later in this document. Bear in mind that in each of these three calendars, the number of classroom hours per semester remains constant.

15-5-15-5-5

Example (2000-2001)

September 5 - December 21	Fall Semester (70 instructional days)
January 2 - February 2	Winter Intersession
February 5 - June 4	Spring Semester (72 days of instruction)
June 18 B July 21/July 24-August 31	Summer Sessions (2)

Advantages:

later start may encourage greater enrollment;
- $ preferred by many students;

allows for three intersessions, including two summer sessions;
- $ allows completion of three semesters' work in one year;

fewest weeks taught in hottest weather;
- $ three intersessions may, depending upon negotiations, permit three opportunities for extra pay;

has longer break between two primary (or longest) semesters; and
- lengthened class sessions means no class time lost.

Disadvantages:

- $ increases faculty contact hours per day, though because the semester is shortened as noted above, the total instructional time remains the same;
- $ spring semester ends in early June;
- $ assignments for counselors, librarians and certain classified positions must be carefully reconsidered and perhaps redesigned;
- $ some special programs and activities (nursing, vocational experiences, athletics, etc) may need to be specially scheduled beyond the shortened semester; and
- $ increased registration and grade collection periods may necessitate additional classified staffing or complex scheduling; offers fewest number of final exam days (5).

16-6-16-6

Example (2000-2001)

August 28-December 20	Fall Semester (73 instructional days)
January 2 - February 9	Winter Intersession
February 12-June 14	Spring Semester (74 instructional days)
June 18-July 28	Summer Session (1)
(Includes 4 professional development days, 1 of which is mandatory 8/25)	

Advantages:

- $ fall semester starts one week later than usual and ends prior to Christmas; and
- $ closer to unified school times.

Disadvantages:

- $ has few final-exam days (6);
- $ offers only a single summer session;
- $ increases weekly faculty contact;
- $ longer class-meetings may not be best learning mode for some students
- $ creates increased difficulty with classroom scheduling;
- $ assignments for counselors, librarians and certain classified positions must be carefully reconsidered and perhaps redesigned; and
- $ as with previous model, some special programs and activities (nursing, vocational experiences, athletics, etc.) may need to be specially scheduled beyond the shortened semester.

Trimester (three terms of equal length, in this case 15 weeks)

Example (2000-2001)

September 7- December 20	Fall Trimester
January 4 - April 15	Winter Trimester
May 15 B August 14	Spring-Summer Trimester (often sub-divided further)

These terms can continue to be subdivided into 3- or 5-week modules, or combined, space allowing, with 8-week courses as well as 8- or 12-week weekend colleges. While no California community college has yet adopted this model, it is used in some four-year universities across the country.

Advantages:

- $ is closest to many unified school district calendars;
- $ has short, intensive semesters; offers break between each session;
- $ spring-summer trimester can be divided to accommodate California fiscal year;
- $ full-time faculty may elect to teach their load in any two of the three, or may teach fewer courses in all three terms;
- $ begins, typically, in early September and ends in April/May; and
- $ is particularly favored by faculty seeking to do post-graduate work at another institutions.

Disadvantages:

- $ fragments faculty, making it difficult hold collegewide or department meetings at which all will be present.

What Advantages do These Alternatives Provide to Faculty?

Clearly faculty would have additional down time for their own personal or professional enrichment and development. As we have noted, such calendar models may also provide additional opportunities for employment for both full- and part-time faculty. Or, depending upon the arrangement negotiated, faculty may extend their contracted periods over additional terms each year to allow more attention to be focused on each course.

Instruction may also improve because of the more concentrated time students would presumably allocate to the class in which they are enrolled. For example, a 5-unit course might typically meet 4 days a week for 1.5 hours; both math and modern language instructors have noted particular advantages to their instruction and to their students under this model. Three unit courses would typically continue to meet twice a week for a slightly extended period of time.

Some faculty may object, however, to the resultant need to retool their pacing or delivery to accommodate that newly extended classroom period; for example, a class that formerly met for 50 minutes would now meet for 65 minutes under a 16-6-16-6-6 model. Other faculty, on the other hand, welcome the opportunity to revise and revamp, noting that for those who teach the same course on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and on Tuesday, Thursday, such modifications are already commonplace.

And What Disadvantages Might These Alternative Calendars Have for Faculty?

In one case, the newspaper advisor had to be present longer, and nursing and vocational programs with separate modules within the semester had additional responsibilities. Counselors and librarians, who already must adjust to a year-long calendar, must make additional shifts to accommodate new peak periods prior to the commencement of new terms. On the other hand, some of these demands can be offset by technological advances such as phone-in registration or online admissions procedures.

Librarians and counselors now have available to them an 11-month contract, while other teaching faculty have a 10-month contract, thus creating, in some cases, differential incomes. While greater opportunities for additional pay may accrue to faculty who then teach during the summer, the base rate for the 11-month contractual year has long-term implications for STRS. Depending on the outcome of any negotiation, it is possible to exacerbate this differential scale; this matter remains a concern for bargaining units and for faculty who do not wish to see their ranks further divided. Related to this differential bases are the current STRS considerations of whether or not to include summer school teaching in the annual base pay tallies, and the legislative interest in pro rata pay for part-time instructors. It is immediately apparent, then, that increasing the number of these shorter segments increases the importance of completing administrative and

legislative discussions at the state level.

More locally, part-time faculty teaching at multiple colleges and their administrators found it difficult to coordinate their schedules with nearby colleges which did not have a similar calendar; their difficulty lay less with the dates of the calendar than with the changes in contact hours.

The calendar changes also made it difficult to hire interpreters for deaf at one college, and, when faculty relied on hourly staff for instructional or other purposes, they found themselves compelled to create novel schedules to abide by district limitations on such hourly workers, as we noted below.

At some colleges, the handling of flex hours is the most problematic. These calendars favor distribution of flex days or opportunities throughout the year as opposed to a concentrated period preceding the semester as often occurs. Santa Monica, for example has negotiated a single mandated flex day that precedes the start of the fall term.

Of considerable concern to faculty, however, are the impacts such calendars might have on collegial governance. While the local academic senate, coordinating councils or collegewide committee meetings and departmental meetings would generally meet only during the primary fall and spring sessions, and not during intersessions, faculty must ensure their representation even in their absence.

Do Alternative Calendars Provide Some Advantages to Students?

In general, students favor shorter semesters. These calendars also attract members of the community whose life circumstances only permit them to make short-term commitments. Intersessions particularly enable students to complete prerequisites and take general education courses under a more intensive and focused manner, often experiencing a Atotal immersion,@ since they take fewer courses than they would in a full term.

Ruth Logan, Professor of Life Sciences and the college Research Coordinator at Santa Monica College, completed an initial study reported in *The Standard Deviant* (Edition 5, November 1, 1999; see Appendix B). The study found that, in an examination of math courses, English courses, and 5 unit chemistry lab courses, the students in 6 and 8 week summer school courses, as compared to those in 18-week courses, were less likely to withdraw, had higher grade point averages on average than those of students in full semesters, and earned higher grades regardless of ethnicity or their enrollment in the class of a full- or part-time instructor. These early findings or measurements of student success, based on a summer school population that may be atypical of students enrolled during other terms, call for additional research and longitudinal studies, particularly of intersession courses of shorter duration. The author also suggests that they were unable in their study to determine if students obtain a better educational experience from full-semester or compressed sessions. While this study provokes discussion among faculty about optimal teaching and learning paradigms, it reminds us all that student success should be primary in our considerations about alternative calendars and that evaluation and research subsequent to

adoption and implementation seems a necessary component of our planning.

What Kinds of Courses Seem to Work Best for Intersession Courses?

A good place to begin consideration is with those courses traditionally offered in 4-6 week summer sessions. Now, to attract new students and encourage additional enrollments by those who attend the primary term, experimentation and innovation seem in order. Those who have implemented intersessions report that many vocational or applied technology courses are ideal and attract students who might otherwise not enroll in a full-semester course. Additionally, general education courses, particularly those designed for non-majors (e.g., biology or geology) are well-received. Other popular choices have included field studies classes (art history field trips, or classes requiring travel or overnight stays); art or photography classes; foreign languages (particularly conversation courses); laboratory classes (chemistry or biology); some literature or film studies classes; personal enrichment courses (study skills, career options); review courses, or other courses for which compression, concentration, and intensity can be advantageous. Intersessions offer faculty an opportunity to design new classes or offer shorter modules of existing classes for fewer hours of general education credit; they may also want to consider other courses for which intense immersion can be an educational benefit for the student.

How are Intersessions Staffed or Funded?

Intersessions are considered a special session and thus, depending on what has been negotiated by the bargaining unit, may provide opportunities for additional pay for faculty who wish to teach during that abbreviated period. Intersessions also provide part-time faculty with additional opportunities for employment. In some cases, the bargaining unit has negotiated that, with permission, full-time faculty may use such employment to make load or bank units for later use.

In claiming state apportionment funds for intersession offerings, colleges implementing such sessions generally "attach" them to the fall or spring semesters. This mechanism also supports the approach of giving the full-time faculty the option of fulfilling part of their load by teaching during the intersession.

These intersessions, however, have hidden costs of which all must be aware. The college must make a determination about its willingness to offer courses and *support* those offerings with the range of student services that make their college experience complete and meaningful. While it seems self-evident that students must have full access to college services regardless of their term of enrollment, providing those services can be more difficult. For example:

Will students enrolled in intersessions or even weekend colleges have access to:

- $ administrative services (admissions, records, registration); financial aid offices;
- $ counseling or health services;
- $ the bookstore;
- $ the cafeteria or food services; the library; and
- $ tutorial centers or college computing facilities?

Will the faculty who teach them have access to:

- $ copying services;
- $ emergency services in the event of a lab accident; registration or administrative assistance for dropping, adding or processing student enrollments; and
- $ computing facilities or media services?

What Advantages do Administrators or Staff see in Such Calendars?

As we suggested earlier, administrators see an alternative calendar either as a means to increase and manage enrollments or to maximize room utilization, or both, allowing the college to make full use of its facilities 7 days a week, throughout the day and evening, all year long.

There are disadvantages, however, of which administrators and staff must be cognizant. In addition to some of those hidden costs associated with compressed or alternative calendars, for a college already close to maximum room utilization, a change in calendar may decrease the number of classes offered during any given day (since a longer class period reduces the number of classes that can be offered in that room); the increase in numbers of terms could, however, increase the total number of classes over the course of the year.

What Other Disadvantages Must Administrators or Staff Consider?

Of course, any change requires adjustment in thinking; our familiarity with the 18-week calendar model means that any new practice will likely encounter some resistance from faculty, students, and college staff. Fortunately, because Santa Monica College and Riverside College have implemented such calendars, some strategies and models for our consideration already exist. So long as administrators and staff recognize the need for broad participation of all groups during the planning stages, suspicions and doubts can be aired and reservations addressed.

On a practical level, obviously salaries and benefits need to be examined carefully; yet increased offerings imply other related costs that may or may not be offset by increased enrollments: staffing of additional registration periods, utilities, heating and cooling, printing and duplication

of both instructional and administrative materials; mailing (of class schedules, applications, etc); transcripts and grade reports are among the many costs that would have to be identified by each unit.

More concretely, and on a very pragmatic level, if the buildings are being used more fully throughout the day and across the year, the maintenance and repairs are likely to increase; however, because there is little down time, there are now few opportunities for scheduled repairs, replacement or general maintenance such as painting, carpet replacement, overhauls of heating/cooling systems, rewiring, cabling for computers, and so forth.

Scheduling of classified staff, notably hourly staff, has proven to be an issue, particularly during peak registration since many districts limit the number of hours an employee can work in a calendar year. Administrators, staff, and their bargaining units for indeed wages, benefits, and working conditions may be affected must work to find practical solutions to already thorny problems. For example, consider these administrative dilemmas: new scheduling patterns must be devised because of continual scheduling and publication deadlines. Grade collection and reporting is compressed and enrollment/registration periods often overlap both of which impact staff and faculty significantly. Students seeking enrollment in courses for which they are just completing the prerequisite must have a mechanism for enrollment and withdrawal pending their successful completion of that prerequisite. Students enrolling throughout the year during various sessions must still complete matriculation.

How is Matriculation Handled? And What About Prerequisite Satisfaction?

Clearly there is some strain on staff and faculty responsible for matriculation and for turn-around reporting, though most colleges have already wrestled with this problem as it occurs in the crunch between the fall and spring semesters as currently configured. Eligibility rosters can be prepared, identifying students taking prerequisite courses to allow them to enroll in the target course in sessions or terms immediately following. As this mechanism is already in place at many colleges, faculty and staff are familiar with their local procedures necessary to ensure student's enrollment. Clearly, continued cooperation and consideration are essential to minimize impacts on student enrollment. At several colleges, general orientations have been reduced: a summer orientation for summer/fall and a December orientation for winter/spring.

How are Traditional Holidays Incorporated Into an Alternative Calendar?

Just as unified school districts do not observe holidays uniformly, community college districts have some flexibility to designate and fix various observations. The Education Code, ' 79020 states, albeit ambiguously, that all community colleges may continue in session or close on specified holidays as follows: January 1st, the third Monday in January, commencing in the 1989-90 fiscal year, known as "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day," February 12th known as "Lincoln Day," the third Monday in February known as "Washington Day," the last Monday in May known as "Memorial Day," July 4th, the first Monday in September known as "Labor Day," November 11th known as "Veterans Day," the Thursday in November proclaimed by the

President as "Thanksgiving Day," and December 25th.

Education Code (e.g., ' 1318, 45203, and 88203) also identifies other holidays that may be locally negotiated. Given such broad latitude, a college's traditional spring break need not be tied to the Easter or Passover calendar date but rather could simply be observed each year, say, in the ninth week of the spring session, or it may be done away with entirely in the compression process.

To ensure that students receive the requisite number of instructional days and minutes, compressed and alternative calendars must attempt to balance out terms in which a number of holidays are scheduled. While establishing the annual calendar is a matter of between governance groups and bargaining agents, faculty will want to remain vigilant that the students academic needs are fully considered.

What of Athletic Programs or Special Vocational Programs That Mandate Enrollment or Modules of a Certain Length?

There has been no reported disadvantage to athletic programs or scheduling; in fact, coaches and athletic directors often favor an intersession as it offers additional opportunities for their scholar-athletes to complete enrolled-hour requirements and maintain their grade point averages.

While nursing programs and other vocational programs may need to respond to regulatory demands, these can be anticipated in advance of any calendar modification and can either be built into the new model or superimposed upon it. In fact, some college faculty report that the new calendars are more amenable to the creation of such modules.

Faculty, though, must encourage all decision-makers to examine the needs of any special groups on their campus and to review any agreements such as those governing veterans, GI benefits, or SACMORE plans.

Would all Colleges in a Multi-college District Have to Agree on a Single Calendar?

No, and that's the delight of such calendar options for some colleges. In fact, an argument could be made that multiple options within a district would increase student options and attract more students to the district as a whole. An alternative calendar may provide a competitive edge to a college in a multi-campus district or in an urban area with neighboring districts. This versatility will be seen, for example, in 2000-2001 within the Los Angeles Community College District. Pierce College, Los Angeles Valley College, and Los Angeles City College have adopted a calendar with a 15-week primary term; West LA College has chosen a 16-week primary term, and all others will remain on an 18-week primary term calendar. In this instance, the negotiated

contract permits such options for the contract period and was decided upon first by the local college faculty within a shared governance framework and then was agreed to by the bargaining unit and the chapter chair.

So who Decides on Whether a College Should Adopt Another Calendar Model or Remain With its Present Practice?

By now it should be apparent that this decision is a monumental one, calling upon the wisdom of all members of the college community and necessitating the best and most collegial of shared governance practices, and ensuring above all that the resulting decision is made in the best interests of students and their academic needs. Boards of trustees must clearly articulate their objectives and make clear any fiscal constraints; college administrators and management must examine honestly their goals and the limitations on college resources whether they are financial, physical, or human; classified staff must feel free to contribute plans and voice reservations; faculty full and part-time faculty together, bear responsibility to see that the principles for coming to a decision, and the decision-making process itself is clearly articulated and observed, and bargaining units must be ever-vigilant about the impacts such changes would have on wages, benefits, and working conditions. In the list of recommendations on page 2, we remind you of the ideas noted above and suggest some appropriate practices for faculty whose campuses are considering such significant changes.